THE MEDIAL KIND OF REASON

Alexander Quanbeck

A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of the Arts in the Department of Philosophy.

Chapel Hill
2020

Approved by:

Ram Neta

Alex Worsnip

Sarah Stroud

ABSTRACT:

Alexander Quanbeck: The Medial Kind of Reason
(Under the direction of Ram Neta)

Evidence is a paradigmatic "right kind of reason" (RKR) for belief. By contrast, a bribe is a paradigmatic "wrong kind of reason" (WKR) for belief. It is typically assumed that all practical reasons for belief are likewise WKRs. However, this thesis argues that certain types of practical reasons for belief—such as reasons for friends to believe well of each other—are neither RKRs nor WKRs. With respect to each of Mark Schroeder's earmarks for distinguishing between RKRs and WKRs—their motivational efficacy, bearing on rationality, and bearing on correctness—some practical reasons cannot be clearly classified either as RKRs or as WKRs but instead fall somewhere in between. The upshot is that the distinction between RKRs and WKRs is not as clear-cut as is typically assumed because there is a distinctive intermediate class of reasons: the "medial kind of reason."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all of my committee members for their stimulating conversation and thoughtful feedback on several drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank those philosophy graduate students at UNC who attended either of the two WIPs at which this paper was presented for their insightful feedback and commentary. I am especially appreciative of Dominik Berger's helpful written comments, Leah Suffern's careful proofreading, and the support of my family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

Consider the following case:

> *Accused Friend*: Suppose that A, B, and C, and D hear a report about their mutual friend E claiming that E has embezzled money from his employer. The report references strong, but not overwhelmingly damning, circumstantial evidence that E is guilty of the accusation. D separately asks A, B, and C whether they believe this accusation. A explains that she believes that E is innocent because she is aware of counterevidence not mentioned in the report supporting E's innocence. B states that he believes that E is innocent because E has offered him $1,000 to disbelieve any rumors that cast his character in a negative light. C admits that the evidence looks bad for E but claims that she nonetheless believes that E is innocent because, as E's friend, she owes it to E to believe that he is innocent unless the evidence against him is overwhelming.

According to a standard analysis of cases like these, the evidence (call this a token A-reason) that A cites as his motivating reason for belief is a paradigmatic example of a so-called "right kind of reason" (RKR) for belief. That is, evidence bears the earmarks which Mark Schroeder (2012b) identifies as characteristic features of RKRs: it 1) constitutes a motivationally efficacious reason for belief that 2) bears on the rationality of a belief in a distinctive way and 3) bears on the correctness of a belief. By contrast, the bribe (call this a token B-reason) that B cites as his motivating reason for belief is a paradigmatic example of a "wrong kind of reason" (WKR) for belief. It is very difficult (or perhaps impossible) to directly and consciously believe on the basis of a bribe, and bribes seem irrelevant to the rationality and correctness of a belief. If C's citation of her obligation as E's friend (call this a token C-reason) as her reason for belief is taken literally, according to the standard analysis, C is likewise citing a WKR. However, I suggest, there is something counterintuitive about this categorization: C-reasons somehow seems *less* like WKRs than B-reasons do.

It is disputed in the literature whether WKRs can be genuine normative reasons. Defenders of WKRs claim that WKRs can be normative reasons, while so-called "WKR skeptics" deny this claim.[1] Those who are WKR skeptics about reasons for belief are typically called "evidentialists," while those who accept that WKRs can be genuine normative reasons for belief are called "pragmatists" about reasons for belief.[2] Evidentialists claim that the type of reason that A cites can be a genuine reason for belief while denying that the putative reasons cited by B and C can count as genuine normative reasons. Indeed, many evidentialists would deny that B's and C's self-reported reasons should be taken literally as claims about their motivating reasons for belief because it is impossible to believe on the basis of practical considerations. Pragmatists, by contrast, claim that the considerations cited by B and C can serve as genuine normative reasons for belief. What evidentialists and traditional pragmatists typically agree about, however, is that B-reasons and C-reasons stand or fall together: either *both* bribes and obligations of friendship can be normative reasons for belief, or *neither* can.

My aim in this paper is to challenge the orthodox view that B-reasons and C-reasons ought to be equally assimilated as WKRs. It is intuitively plausible that C-reasons are importantly different from B-reasons (though it is admittedly difficult to spell out precisely what this intuitive difference amounts to). In what follows, I aim to make precise and vindicate the intuition that C-reasons differ from B-reasons by arguing that C-reasons are neither RKRs nor

[1] Another possibility is to reject the RKR/WKR distinction entirely (see, for example, McCormick (2018) and Rinard (2019)). However, for my purposes here I will ignore this possibility and assume that there is a real distinction between RKRs and WKRs.

[2] It is worth noting that the question of whether WKRs can *possibly* be normative reasons is distinct from the question of whether WKRs are *actually* normative reasons. For instance, one might be a pragmatist about reasons for belief who thinks that having true beliefs is supremely valuable and having false beliefs is highly disvaluable, and so there are rarely (or never) actually any WKRs for belief.

WKRs but instead are members of a distinct, intermediate class of reasons—the "medial kind of reason"—which fall in between RKRs and WKRs. That is, Mark Schroeder's (2012b) "earmark test"—which provides a powerful diagnostic tool for determining whether a putative reason counts as an RKR or a WKR—does not render a clear verdict regarding whether to count these types of cases as RKRs or WKRs. With respect to each of Schroeder's earmarks—motivational efficacy, rationality, and correctness—I will argue that C-reasons cannot be classified either as RKRs or as WKRs but instead fall somewhere in between. The upshot is that the distinction between RKRs and WKRs is not as clear-cut as is typically assumed. As such, there is a plausible yet unexplored middle ground between evidentialism and pragmatism about reasons for belief.

My argument will proceed as follows. In section two, I develop an account of how C-reasons operate and argue that the intuitive difference between B-reasons and C-reasons cannot be adequately explained by appealing to pragmatic or moral encroachment or to permissivist accounts of epistemic rationality. In section three, I elaborate on Schroeder's earmark test and argue that testing C-reasons according to each earmark renders the verdict that the C-reasons are neither clearly RKRs nor clearly WKRs. In section four, I consider the upshot of my argument for the canonical distinction between RKRs and WKRs and for the debate between evidentialists and pragmatists about reasons for belief.

2. Analyzing the Distinctiveness of C-Reasons

In order to get an intuitive grasp of what sorts of practical considerations count as C-reasons, let us consider some cases discussed in the literature on doxastic wronging and moral encroachment in which non-evidential considerations intuitively affect what one ought to believe. Many of these cases elicit similar intuitive reactions to C's response in *Accused Friend*

when contrasted with cases in which someone forms a belief on the basis of financial considerations.[3] Here are some examples involving (candidate) C-reasons:

> *Wounded by Belief*: Suppose that Mark has an alcohol problem and has been sober for eight months. Tonight there's a departmental colloquium for a visiting speaker, and throughout the reception, he withstands the temptation to have a drink. But, when he gets home his partner, Maria, smells the wine that the speaker spilled on his sleeve, and Mark can tell from the way Maria looks at him that she thinks he's fallen off the wagon. Although the evidence suggests that Mark has fallen off the wagon, would it be unreasonable for Mark to seek an apology for what Maria believes of him? (Basu 2019a: 917, adapted from Basu and Schroeder (2019))

In this case, similarly to *Accused Friend,* it's plausible that the fact that Maria would wrong Mark by believing ill of him gave her a reason against believing that he drank at the colloquium in a way that a bribe would not.

While some reasons to believe well of others are due to the particular relationship the believer bears to the person about whom they are forming a belief, plausibly there are also impartial moral considerations in favor of believing well of others. Consider the following case:

> *Racial Stereotype*: Aidan is a waiter at a restaurant. As he leaves work for the night, he crosses paths with a Black family entering the restaurant. He has strong, but not flawless, inductive evidence supporting the prediction that any given set of Black diners at his restaurant will give their waiters tips lower than 20%. On the basis of the family's race, he forms the belief that they will leave one of his colleagues a tip lower than 20%. (Fritz (2019), adapted from Basu (2019b))

In *Racial Stereotype,* it similarly seems plausible that the fact that Aidan's belief involves a morally objectionable racial stereotype gave him a reason against believing in a way that a bribe would not.

Moreover, having a generic disposition to believe well of others despite evidence that reflects poorly on their character—regardless of our relationship to them or specific morally

[3] Note that the relevant distinction here isn't between prudential and moral considerations, for I am classifying "moral bribes"—e.g. a case in which an eccentric billionaire offers to donate a billion dollars to an effective charity if and only if C believes that E is innocent—as instances of B-reasons.

salient features like race—is plausibly a virtuous trait (as Preston-Roedder (2013) argues). If so, then we have reasons to believe well of others which likewise seem intuitively different than putative reasons provided by bribes.

While I have called all of the above cases instances of C-reasons, these cases often are *not* treated as cases in which practical reasons for belief—and hence putative WKRs—are operative. Instead, they are sometimes analyzed either as instances of pragmatic or moral encroachment or as beliefs that are rational due to the permissive nature of epistemic rationality. Neither of these analyses must involve a commitment to taking C's report as a literal citation of the reasons which directly motivate her to believe that E is innocent. Instead, a pragmatic encroacher might claim that C identifies practical features of her situation which affect the threshold for the evidence required to justify her belief (without counting as a *reason* for belief at all). Alternatively, a permissivist might interpret C's report as citing the reasons why she adopted the rationally permissible epistemic standards that resulted in her forming a belief but not her direct motivating reasons for belief. If either of these approaches can explain the intuitive difference between B's response and C's response, then the cases above do not raise any problems for the traditional RKR/WKR distinction because they do not require that the distinction be invoked as an explanation of the difference.

Yet in this section I will argue that ultimately neither of these approaches can vindicate the rationality of C's response nor (more importantly) can they adequately satisfy an important desideratum of an analysis of cases like *Accused Friend*: explaining the intuitive difference between the types of considerations that B and C cite. As such, I will suggest, appealing to the RKR/WKR distinction is necessary to explain this intuitive difference. Along the way, I will clarify how, on my account, C-reasons operate.

2.1 Moral Encroachment

Perhaps the most common way of attempting to accommodate the relevance of practical considerations for what we ought to believe is via the mechanism of pragmatic or moral encroachment. Analyzing *Accused Friend* as a case of encroachment promises to explain the intuitive difference between C's response and B's response without interpreting C's response as a citation of a practical reason for belief.

The most common way of formulating an account of pragmatic encroachment is to claim that practical stakes affect the evidential threshold for epistemic justification. In situations in which the practical costs of error are high, more evidence is required to epistemically justify belief than in situations in which the practical costs of error are low. On some accounts, moral encroachment operates similarly. What James Fritz (2019) calls "moderate moral encroachment"—according to which epistemic norms are sensitive to the moral features of actions and options—mirrors the structure of traditional pragmatic encroachment, except the relevant practical considerations are moral instead of merely prudential.[4]

By contrast, what Fritz (2019) calls "radical moral encroachment" departs from traditional pragmatic encroachment by claiming that epistemic norms are sensitive to the moral features of beliefs themselves (independently of the beliefs' role in guiding action). In radical moral encroachment, the moral costs of holding a belief itself raise the evidential threshold for epistemic justification. Cases like *Accused Friend*—in which a belief itself is at issue, and not the consequences of relying on the belief in practical reasoning—are most naturally analyzed as

[4] For example, here is an excerpt from a case in Fritz (2019): "César parked his car four hours ago, and he cannot currently see it. César's friend Maryam informs him that there is a maniacal traffic officer on the loose, and if the officer sees César's car parked illegally, he will fly into a homicidal rage and kill five innocents. César has the opportunity to check on his car and, if need be, to move it."

instances of radical moral encroachment.[5] As such, radical moral encroachment will be the focus of the rest of this section.

In one recent account of radical moral encroachment, Rima Basu and Mark Schroeder (2019) argue that the non-derivative moral badness of a belief itself raises the evidential threshold necessary for epistemic justification.[6] On their account, some beliefs—such as Maria's or Aidan's in *Wounded by Belief* and *Racial Stereotype,* respectively—can doxastically wrong the person about whom the belief is formed, which generates moral considerations against belief. (In some situations, the believer's relationship to the person about whom they are forming the belief is presumably salient in determining the weight of the moral considerations.) As Basu and Schroeder put it, "As the moral considerations against belief increase, so does the evidence that is required in order to epistemically justify that belief" (2019: 201-202).

Applying Basu's and Schroeder's analysis to *Accused Friend,* the friendship between C and E explains why there are especially strong moral considerations against C's believing that E is guilty. These strong moral considerations thereby raise the threshold for the evidence necessary to epistemically justify C's belief that E is guilty. Thus the fact that E is C's friend can explain why C might not be epistemically justified in believing in E's guilt even if a stranger

[5] This is not to deny that some cases similar to *Accused Friend* can also be analyzed as instances of moderate moral encroachment. For example, Sarah Moss argues that acting on false beliefs that involve racial profiling can be harmful (2018: 196-197). On Moss's analysis, these cases count as instances of moderate moral encroachment. However, cases like *Wounded by Belief,* and *Racial Stereotype* are intended to elicit the intuitive judgment that the moral badness of beliefs themselves *alone* suffice to generate encroachment.

[6] In their co-authored paper, Basu and Schroeder do not explain precisely what the moral costs of belief consist in, perhaps because they disagree. Schroeder (2018) argues that only beliefs which *falsely* diminish the person about whom they are formed can wrong that person. For Schroeder, the relevant moral badness consists in the *risk* of wronging. By contrast, Basu (2019a) argues that even true beliefs can wrong if the believer fails to adopt the evidential threshold for belief consistent with acknowledging the other as a person.

who believed the same proposition on the basis of identical evidence would be epistemically justified in holding this belief. By contrast, the fact that B would financially benefit from believing in E's innocence while a stranger who was not bribed wouldn't similarly benefit does *not* generate the sort of consideration that raises the evidential threshold for epistemic justification.

Yet Basu and Schroeder's account (as it is specified so far) does not explain why C might rationally believe outright that E is innocent. That is, while their account explains how practical considerations can count *against* believing a proposition, it does not explain how practical considerations sometimes seem to count *in favor of* believing a proposition. This issue can be addressed by making a simple modification to their account, namely allowing that friends can doxastically wrong each other by failing to believe well of each other.[7] If we make this amendment, then the ground is cleared for explaining why C could be epistemically justified in believing well of E due to their relationship: the moral considerations against suspension of judgment (and disbelief) *lower* the threshold for the evidence needed to epistemically justify C's belief in E's innocence.[8] As such, at least at first glance, appealing to radical moral encroachment promises to explain the intuitive difference between B's and C's responses.

[7] In "Doxastic Wronging," Basu and Schroeder officially remain neutral about whether we can doxastically wrong others by failing to believe a proposition about them (noting in footnote 19 that they disagree with each other about this point). However, I find it very plausible that we can wrong others—especially our friends—by failing to believe well of them. To further motivate this point, doxastic wronging by failing to believe something may also occur in certain cases of testimony. For instance, Crewe and Ichikawa (forthcoming: 9) argue that there are positive epistemic norms requiring that hearers believe the testimony of victims of sexual assault. If Crewe and Ichikawa are right, failure to believe this testimony would intuitively be a case of doxastic wronging.)

[8] Schroeder elsewhere (2012a: 277-78) defends the view that the risks of failing to believe a proposition lower the threshold required to justify belief, so in principle he should have no objection to this sort of maneuver. Basu briefly discusses this issue, but ultimately comes down as ambivalent (2019c: 18).

However, it is not clear that moral encroachment has the resources to explain why C-considerations can raise the threshold for belief while B-considerations cannot. Critics of radical moral encroachment such as Sarah Moss (2018) and James Fritz (2019) argue that the moral badness of beliefs themselves is not the sort of feature that can shift the evidential threshold for epistemic justification.[9] Another (perhaps more serious) concern with radical moral encroachment is that it is hard-pressed to explain why the moral badness of a belief must be non-derivative in order to affect the evidential threshold for justification. Suppose that it would be morally bad for C not to believe that E is innocent because E will be enraged and kill her family if C doesn't believe that he is innocent. Intuitively, this only generates a B-consideration against believing that E is innocent.

While this is an explanatory challenge for radical moral encroachment specifically, Worsnip (2020) argues that *all* accounts of encroachment (including moderate encroachment) lack a principled way of distinguishing between those practical considerations which affect the evidential threshold for justification and those which do not. After examining a variety of attempts by proponents of pragmatic encroachment to articulate the relevant principle, Worsnip

[9] Moss considers the possibility of expanding an account of moral encroachment to allow the moral costs of belief (as opposed to the *risks* of acting on a false belief) to bear on a belief's epistemic status, i.e. to make space for radical moral encroachment. Yet Moss suggests that it is counterintuitive to suppose that the costs of a belief bear on its epistemic status, as refraining from believing a proposition because it would be costly is simply irrational wishful thinking (2018: 196). However, the cases considered above are intended to elicit the intuitive reaction that certain costs or benefits to belief *do* in fact bear differently on the rationality of beliefs. We should thus be hesitant to accept Moss's argument in its full generality.
James Fritz raises related, yet more theoretical, objections to moral encroachment. Fritz argues that, unlike features of actions and options, the moral features of beliefs themselves do not bear on their epistemic rationality. Rather, they bear the standard features of WKRs against belief because a) such features are not motivationally efficacious and b) it is "not plausible that the core standard of correctness for belief—the one intimately connected to *what it is* to believe—emphasizes avoidance of morally bad mental states" (2019). I will argue in section three, however, that C-considerations are not in fact WKRs because they are (to some degree) motivationally efficacious and do bear on a relevant standard of correctness.

concludes that none of them are successful. If Worsnip's conclusion is correct, it straightforwardly entails that moral encroachment (at least in any of its current forms) cannot explain the intuitive difference between B's response and C's response.

Although these challenges to radical moral encroachment may not be insurmountable, they provide good reasons to doubt that appealing to moral encroachment alone to analyze *Accused Friend* can satisfy a crucial desideratum of an adequate analysis of the case: providing an explanation of the intuitive difference between B's response and C's response. My argument in section three aims to provide this explanation by appealing to the RKR/WKR distinction.[10]

A second problem with employing the mechanism of moral encroachment to vindicate C's response is that it fails to capture the full range of ways in which the practical considerations C cites operate. That is, friendship does not bear on how we ought to form beliefs about our friends *merely* by affecting the evidential threshold for epistemic justification. To illustrate this point, I quote at length Sarah Stroud's description of how our procedures for forming beliefs about our friends differ from our procedures for forming beliefs about strangers:

> The first locus of difference is the cognitive activities we engage in when processing new data about our friends. What is distinctive in this domain is that we tend to devote more energy to defeating or minimizing the impact of unfavorable data than we otherwise would. To start with, we are more liable to scrutinize and to question the evidence being presented than we otherwise would be; we spend more time and energy doing this than we otherwise would. For example, we are more likely to ask ourselves various questions about the person telling the story, the answers to which could discredit the evidence being presented. We might ask ourselves: Is this person generally accurate, fair-minded, and trustworthy? Is she malicious, either in general or toward my friend in particular? Is it somehow in her interest that this story be true, or be thought true? We will spend more mental energy generating and assessing such possible discrediting factors than we typically do when we hear gossip about someone who is not a friend (just think how rarely we do these things in those cases)…
> In addition to these differences of method, friendship also yields different doxastic outcomes: different beliefs. I want to claim that not just the cognitive procedures we

[10] Perhaps the account that I develop in section three could be adopted by proponents of moral encroachment in order to meet this explanatory challenge. Yet even so, appeals to moral encroachment to explain *Accused Friend* face the additional obstacles discussed in this section.

> deploy in assessing evidence but the set of beliefs we end up with will systematically differ when the subject of the story is our friend, and in particular that the latter will be more favorable than they otherwise would be. This is the second locus of the differential epistemic practices connected with friendship: where our friends are concerned, we draw different conclusions and make different inferences than we otherwise would (or than a detached observer would). I noted above that we spend more energy generating, that is, coming up with, alternative—and less damning—explanations of the reported conduct when the story we're told is about a friend. But that isn't all, for we are also likely to give such alternative constructions greater credence than we would for a nonfriend. And at the end of the day we are simply less likely to conclude that our friend acted disreputably, or that he is a bad person, than we would be in the case of a nonfriend. Friendship seems to alter not just the procedures we use to process new information but the conclusions we end up drawing. (2006: 505-506)

According to Stroud's account, the partiality that we demonstrate (and ought to demonstrate) towards friends is, in contrast with the moral encroacher's account, operative at several different levels of our belief-forming procedure. Not only do our evidential thresholds differ when we form beliefs about our friends, but the ways that we process data and interpret evidence about our friends also differ. Consequently, an apparent implication of Stroud's account—in contrast with moral encroachment—is that friends ought to form not only different beliefs but also different credences about each other than they would, given the same information, about non-friends.[11]

While defenders of moral encroachment might push back and deny that practical considerations should bear on how we initially process data or on how we form our credences, Stroud's description of how friends do and ought to reason about each other strikes me as a

[11] While this objection applies to standard, threshold-shifting views of pragmatic encroachment, it does not apply to Kate Nolfi's alternative weight-shifting account of pragmatic encroachment. Nolfi argues that instead of raising the evidential threshold for justified belief, some practical considerations "determine the epistemic weight of those other considerations that serve (or might potentially serve) as S's basis for believing that p" (2019: 44). On Nolfi's account, like on my proposal, friendship ought to lead us to give more weight to evidence that reflects well on our friends and less weight to evidence that reflects poorly on our friends. While I have some sympathy towards Nolfi's proposal, its plausibility depends on her action-oriented account of epistemic rationality. For my purposes in this paper, I do not wish to incur a commitment to Nolfi's account of epistemic rationality, so I will not consider Nolfi's view at greater length.

phenomenologically plausible account of how the norms of friendship govern belief. Preserving this feature of its phenomenology is a desideratum in a theoretical account of the norms governing friendship. If moral encroachers deny that this is a plausible pre-theoretical account of how we feel we ought to form beliefs about friends, I have little more to say in response.[12] If, however, moral encroachers resist Stroud's account on theoretical grounds, I shall attempt to defuse such worries later in the paper by offering an alternative theoretical account of how friends ought to form beliefs about each other.

The inadequacy of appealing to moral encroachment to explain cases similar to C's is especially vivid when we consider cases in which practical considerations seem to count in favor of believing propositions with highly indecisive evidence. For instance, suppose that in *Accused Friend* an impartial observer would rationally judge there to be a 60% chance that E is guilty (and hence a 40% chance that E is innocent). Yet C, recall, doesn't merely suspend judgment regarding E's guilt, but believes outright that E is innocent. In order for moral encroachers to vindicate C's belief, they would be committed to claiming that belief with a credence of less than

[12] Crawford (2019) offers one such criticism of Stroud's account of epistemic partiality in friendship, on the grounds that Stroud's account inaccurately characterizes authentic friendships. Crawford claims that epistemic partiality in friendship is inappropriate because it is partly constitutive of being a good friend "that one's attitudes toward one's friends are…appropriately responsive to the perceived features of one's friends" (2019: 1587). Although Crawford cashes this out in theoretical terms by claiming that friends' beliefs about each other ought to be responsive only to object-given reasons, her argument is grounded in large part on our pre-theoretical judgments that friendship involves perceiving and esteeming our friends as how they really are.
While Crawford's observation is astute, it's not clear to me that authentic friendship *only* involves seeing our friends as they really are. Rather, it's plausible that our friends should see us (at least to some degree) as how we ought to be or how we want ourselves to be. Moreover, I worry that some theoretical commitments seep into Crawford's critique of epistemic partiality in friendship, as Crawford seems to assume the very dichotomy between object-given and state-given reasons (which is one way of cashing out the RKR/WKR distinction) that I aim to undercut in this essay. That is, Crawford assimilates all non-object-given putative reasons for belief to state-given reasons derived from the value of having a belief. However, I will argue in section 3.3 that some non-RKRs are not generated simply by the value of having an attitude.

.5 is not only possible but rational. Yet this is an implausible result. If believing a proposition with a credence of .4 is even possible, it is both epistemically and structurally irrational.

Appealing to practical reasons—which bear on the entire belief-forming process and can conflict with epistemic reasons—avoids this problem. On the account I am suggesting, friendship provides C with practical reasons to adopt a belief-forming process such that she interprets the evidence against her friend in a way that leads her to have a lower credence than an impartial observer would in E's guilt and a higher credence in E's innocence.[13] This is not to deny that reasons of friendship operate by shifting the evidential threshold for C to form an outright belief—for in Stroud's description above, good friends are more hesitant to believe ill of each other after all the evidence has come in—but rather to claim that, at least in some cases, practical considerations can have a more fundamental, thoroughgoing effect on the process by which one forms beliefs. Because moral encroachment only allows for practical considerations to operate at the level of assenting to a proposition, they cannot adequately capture this feature of Stroud's account of epistemic partiality in friendship.

Of course, an appealing feature of employing the framework of moral encroachment to analyze *Accused Friend* is that it preserves the epistemic rationality of C's belief. By contrast, Stroud's view entails that (according to standard conceptions of epistemic rationality) friendship sometimes requires epistemic irrationality because it requires us to employ epistemic standards that result in beliefs biased in favor of our friends. This is admittedly a cost of Stroud's view, a cost which those who wish to deny the possibility of conflict between practical and epistemic reasons (such as Schroeder) would deem to be a very serious one. While one may wish to deny

[13] It's worth noting that because C justifies her belief by reference to her particular relationship to E, my account does not entail that C must consider the credences of the impartial observer (who lacks this particular relationship to E) to be epistemically irrational.

the possibility of conflict on theoretical grounds, on an intuitive level it is plausible that conflict between different types of normative reasons is a general and ubiquitous phenomenon (as Fritz (2019) observes).[14] It is unsurprising that friendship could provide further intuitive instances of this conflict. So, barring theoretical commitments that preclude the possibility of conflict between practical and epistemic rationality, there is no need to adhere to encroachment just to avoid positing such a conflict.

2.2 Permissivism

An alternative method for vindicating the rationality of C's response without postulating a distinctive class of C-reasons for belief is to appeal to a permissivist account of rationality. In its most generic form, permissivism is the view that multiple incompatible doxastic attitudes can epistemically rationally be taken towards the same proposition given the same body of evidence.[15] In short, a permissivist analysis of *Accused Friend* may be appealing if it could offer the following explanation of how it could be epistemically permissible for C but not B to believe that E is innocent: that on the basis of practical reasons which differ in kind from the practical reasons B cites, C adopts permissible epistemic standards that result in the belief that E is innocent.[16] However, in this section, I argue that while the best version of permissivism avoids

[14] Fritz elaborates, "Sometimes, it's morally bad to envy someone else's possession, but the possession is nevertheless enviable. Sometimes, it's morally bad to have a positive aesthetic reaction to a work of art, but the artwork is nevertheless aesthetically impressive. Mature moral agents have to learn to navigate situations like this: situations in which the moral reasons against an attitude are both powerful and reasons of the wrong kind" (2019).

[15] The important difference, though, is that permissivists do not say that shifting one's evidential threshold is epistemically required, but at most practically required.

[16] To be clear, this is not the only analysis of the case available to permissivists. Indeed, the analysis that I offer in section three is compatible with permissivism. However, I take it that this analysis is the most promising way to explain the intuitive difference between B's and C's responses by employing *only* permissivist machinery.

the objections raised against analyzing *Accused Friend* via moral encroachment, appealing to permissivism alone cannot explain the difference between the considerations B and C cite and cannot easily vindicate the rationality of epistemic partiality in friendship.

A common way of formulating permissivist accounts of epistemic rationality involves claiming that the "epistemic standards" (or, roughly synonymously, "evidential standards" or "evidential policies") that one has fix what it is epistemically rational for one to believe, yet that the choice of evidential standards themselves is permissive. In Miriam Schoenfield's influential defense of permissivism, she defines epistemic standards as "a function from bodies of evidence to doxastic states which the agent takes to be truth conducive. Roughly, this means that the agent has high confidence that forming opinions using her standards will result in her having high confidence in truths and low confidence in falsehoods" (2014: 199). Schoenfield grants that this notion of "epistemic standards" is still quite broad and admits of different interpretations.

Alex Worsnip (forthcoming) usefully distinguishes between several different interpretations of what he calls "evidential standards" (synonymous with "epistemic standards"), two of which are relevant for our purposes. The first account of "evidential standards" refers to "our views about what evidentially supports what, and how strongly (or, in a Bayesian framework, our priors)" (forthcoming, chapter 4). (Let us call this the "wide sense" of epistemic standards.) The second (very different) account of evidential standards refers to "how much evidence we think is required to warrant all-out belief in some proposition." (Let us call this the "narrow sense" of epistemic standards.)

In two recent papers arguing that believing in ourselves and others can be epistemically rational even in situations in which failure is reasonably likely, Jennifer Morton and Sarah Paul (2018, 2019) appeal to the latter sort of permissivism. (Let's call this the "narrow permissivist"

approach.) Morton and Paul argue that a "thinker's sensitivity to new evidence" is permissive. They call this level of sensitivity an "evidential threshold" which provides an answer to the following question: "In a given context, how much evidence is required—that is, how compelling must the evidence be—before the thinker comes to a conclusion about what to believe or revises her current beliefs?" (2019: 190-91). On Morton's and Paul's view, practical considerations provide practical reasons to adopt a certain set of evidential standards (in the sense of adopting a certain evidential threshold). Unlike pragmatic encroachment, Morton's and Paul's view does not entail that there is a single epistemically permissible evidential threshold that shifts in response to practical considerations. Instead, on their account multiple evidential thresholds are epistemically permissible and practical considerations determine which evidential threshold one ought (in a practical, not epistemic sense, of "ought") to adopt. On this analysis, shifting one's evidential threshold is thus (at most) practically required, but not epistemically required.

Morton and Paul develop this account to explain why we can rationally believe that we (or our friends) will succeed when undertaking difficult tasks, but it can be straightforwardly applied to analyze *Accused Friend*: C has practical reason to adopt an evidential threshold (from the set of epistemically permissible evidential thresholds) according to which less evidence is required for her to believe that E is innocent and more counterevidence is required for her to revise this belief.

Morton's and Paul's permissivist approach avoids the puzzle moral encroachers must address regarding how friendship can provide the sorts of considerations that bear on what we ought to believe. However, this narrow permissivist approach is still subject to some of the same objections as pragmatic encroachment. If Stroud's account of epistemic partiality in friendship is

correct, more than our evidential threshold will change when we form beliefs about our friends. Rather, good friends' entire belief-forming procedures, including their epistemic standards in the wide sense, will shift when they form beliefs about each other's character traits, abilities, and behavior. For instance, friends give more weight to evidence that confirms propositions that reflect well on their friend and less weight to disconfirming evidence, seek out evidence that will confirm favorable propositions and avoid acquiring disconfirming evidence, and continue inquiry when the results are unfavorable and end inquiry as soon as the results are favorable. So, I suggest, what we might call "wide permissivism"—which allows that the different belief-forming procedures friends employ are epistemically rational—is better able to explain the thoroughgoing differences Stroud identifies in how friends ought to form beliefs about each other.

At least at first glance, the wide permissivist approach appears to be an attractive way of analyzing *Accused Friend*. It promises to explain why C's response sounds like a more credible and less irrational response than B's: C is describing her motivating reason for adopting the epistemic standards—roughly, the reason which she takes to be a normative reason for adopting her epistemic standards and which causes her to adopt her epistemic standards—that resulted in her believing that E is innocent. Because her epistemic standards caused C to believe that E is innocent, C might still be interpreted literally as citing her motivating reason for belief (or at least as citing her motivating reasons for acquiring a disposition to believe well of her friends). The reason C cites is simply an *indirect* motivating reason because it is mediated by her epistemic standards. By contrast, the reason cited by B is more naturally construed as a directly operative reason for belief not mediated by the adoption of his epistemic standards. That is, independently of B's judgment of how strongly the evidence supports the proposition that E is

innocent, B employs the fact that he will profit from believing that E is innocent as a distinct premise in his final deliberation about what to believe which counts in favor of believing that E is innocent.

On this analysis, because C's belief is mediated by her (permissible) epistemic standards in a way that B's is not, the wide permissivist analysis can claim that C's belief is ex post rational while B's belief is not. Moreover, because C's cited reason for belief is mediated by evidence while B's is not, C's citation of her motivating reason for belief is more credible than B's. Hence, the wide permissivist approach seems to offer a compelling analysis of the intuitive difference between B's and C's responses.

The distinction between indirect and direct motivating reasons for belief does important work in this analysis of *Accused Friend.* Yet one might wonder whether putative indirect motivating reasons, such as the reasons for which one adopts epistemic standards, count as genuine motivating reasons for belief.

One response is for the wide permissivist to deny that C is genuinely citing her motivating reason for belief and claim instead that C is only offering a causal explanation of why she holds her epistemic standards. On this interpretation, the wide permissivist analysis (like the encroachment analysis) refuses to take C's response literally as a citation of her motivating reasons. But if the permissivist adopts this view, it is unclear how this analysis could explain the difference between B's and C's responses.

Alternatively, a proponent of the wide permissivist analysis might appeal to Susanna Rinard's (2019) argument that even if evidence is necessary to form a belief, practical considerations can constitute an agent's motivating reason because evidence can be used as a mere means to believe. Rinard considers the example of someone who, convinced by Pascal's

wager, undertakes a process of selectively exposing herself to evidence that will result in her believing in the existence of God. In this case, Rinard argues, the practical reasons the agent takes herself to have for believing in the existence of God serve as her motivating reasons, while evidence is used as a mere means to believe. While these practical reasons are not the direct basis of her belief, despite being indirect they can still count as motivating reasons for belief. Likewise, we might suppose, adopting certain epistemic standards can be a means to acquiring a desired belief-forming *disposition* which will result in beliefs that an agent takes herself to have reason to acquire. (Note that C does not aim to believe well of E in every situation but rather aims to be disposed to believe well of E *so long as the evidence isn't overwhelmingly damning*.) As such, we can treat the indirect reason C cites as her genuine motivating reason.[17]

Of course, Rinard's account also explains how B-reasons can constitute motivating reasons for belief, so B's response could be analyzed in precisely the same way as C's response. So in order to explain the difference between B's and C's responses, this permissivist analysis must provide an account of how friendship and financial incentives generate fundamentally different *kinds* of reasons to adopt certain epistemic standards. One possible account could involve claiming that when we adopt our epistemic standards with regard to a certain proposition-type (e.g. propositions that refer to features of our friends' character or prospects of success), we are committed to consistently employing them when forming beliefs about this proposition-type.[18] Because there are not any proposition-types that we are routinely bribed to

[17] Rinard's argument complicates matters because it entails that when evidence is used as a mere means to believe it does not count as a motivating reason. However, a proponent of this wide permissivist approach could reject this part of Rinard's view and instead claim that evidence can serve as a partial motivating reason in such cases in addition to practical considerations.

[18] Cf. Nolfi's (2019) argument (in the context of pragmatic encroachment) that those practical considerations which shift how we interpret the weight of evidence must bear on beliefs which facilitate suitable action across a wide range of circumstances.

believe, we in fact do not have reasons to adopt certain epistemic standards towards propositions we are bribed to believe. By contrast, we do consistently have practical reasons to adopt certain epistemic standards regarding the class of proposition-types regarding our friends' character or prospects of success. Hence, this difference might explain why C's response strikes us as more rational and as a more plausible description of her motivating reason than B's response does.

However, recall that B was bribed to disbelieve *any* proposition that casts E's character in a negative light. This may be a smaller class of proposition-types than those to which C's epistemic standards apply, but the size of the class doesn't seem relevant. (Moreover, we could modify the scenario such that B is offered financial incentives to believe well of *all* of her friends. Intuitively this doesn't generate a difference between B's and C's reasons). The permissivist thus needs to say more in order to vindicate the apparent difference between B-reasons and C-reasons. While I cannot rule out alternative explanations, the most promising way to explain this difference, I suggest, is to treat indirect reasons for belief as likewise subject to the RKR/WKR distinction. In section three, I will develop an account that does this.

Another way that one might push back against this permissivist analysis is to deny that C's response can be accommodated solely by appealing to her reasons for adopting the epistemic standards that lead her to believe that E is innocent. That is, perhaps C is responding to a directly motivationally efficacious reason for belief generated by the norms of friendship that operates by serving as a premise in the final stages of her deliberation about what to believe. According to this interpretation, after C has evaluated the evidence and is deliberating about whether to believe that E is innocent, believe that E is guilty, or suspend judgment, C might take the fact that E is her friend to count as a reason to believe that E is innocent, or at least a reason against believing that E is guilty. The explanation of this tendency is simply that, as C explains, she

owes it to her friend to believe well of him. As such, C takes her obligation to E to provide a reason for her to believe well of E. This is not to say that friendship alone generates sufficient normative or motivating reason for belief, but rather that C takes herself to have *some* additional, direct reason to believe that E is innocent and is able to respond to this reason in deliberating about what to believe.

Of course, one might be suspicious of the claim that friendship can generate directly motivationally efficacious reasons for belief. To make this seem like a more plausible analysis of the phenomenology of how friends form beliefs about each other, let's add another feature to the original version of *Accused Friend*. Suppose that after C hears secondhand the rumor about E, E tells C that he is innocent. We might further stipulate that most people accused of embezzlement lie to their friends about it, so someone who overheard their conversation would take E's testimony to be very weak evidence in support of E's innocence (and suppose, moreover, that C knows all of this.) Nonetheless, it seems plausible that the fact that E is C's friend gives C an additional reason to believe E to which C is (at least to some extent) *capable of responding*. While I have suggested that friendship involves a disposition to interpret a friend's actions in a positive light, it is highly plausible that friendship *also* involves a disposition to take a friend at their word.[19]

[19] Richard Moran's account of the reasons for belief uniquely produced by the speaker's *telling* the listener can illuminate this point. Moran (2005) argues that accepting what someone tells you is not merely a matter of believing the proposition asserted but also of believing the teller himself. In telling his listener, the speaker's offering his assurance of the truth of the utterance constitutes a reason for belief which is not simply evidential. As Moran puts it, there is a "'relational' or second-personal normativity" involved in such tellings that generates reasons for the listener to accept the assurance of the teller (2013: 134).
If Moran's account of the non-evidential reasons for belief provided by telling is correct, then very plausibly the hearer's relationship to the teller intensifies the reasons generated by the teller's offer of assurance. If we have reason to accept the assurances of strangers regarding the truth of what they tell us, we may have stronger reasons—perhaps due to our trust of a friend or to our enhanced obligation to respect them *qua* teller—to accept the assurances of our friends.

It rings true phenomenologically, I think, that we are more inclined to accept the assurances of our friends than of non-friends (and not merely because we have evidence that our friends are more reliable testifiers). One might think that reasons to accept our friends' assurances only *intensify* the epistemic reasons for belief already provided by their testimony. I think it's plausible, though, that the fact that a testifier is a friend directly provides a distinct, additional reason to believe the friend which cannot be reduced to an intensification of an existing reason. Someone deliberating about whether to believe a friend might reason as follows: "He is admittedly a fairly unreliable testifier, and he has lied in the past about what he has done. I recognize that I have good evidential reasons to suspend judgment. But nonetheless, he is my friend, and I owe it to him to believe what he tells me." If this is right, at least in some circumstances friendship directly provides reasons to be epistemically partial to our friends by giving us additional, non-epistemic reasons to believe what they tell us.

The purpose of this discussion of testimony from friends is to enhance the plausibility of my claim that friendship can generate direct reasons for belief that serve as premises (independent of their effect on one's epistemic standards) in one's final deliberation about what to believe. While I have not decisively established that friendship provides direct reasons that operate in this way, I hope at least to have made this suggestion plausible—and hence to have made plausible an interpretation of C's response as involving a citation of her direct motivating reason for belief.

In addition to the worry that the permissivist analysis cannot adequately explain the difference between the considerations that B and C cite, a second concern—specific to wide permissivism—is that in order to claim that C's belief in E's innocence is epistemically rational, a wide permissivist may be committed to a highly permissive—perhaps implausibly highly

permissive—account of epistemic rationality. As Schoenfield notes, "The fact that there are multiple permissible epistemic standards does not mean that any set of epistemic standards is permissible. It is consistent with permissivism that there be substantive rational requirements on a set of epistemic standards" (2014: n16).

Yet if Stroud is right, the norms of friendship require employing *significantly* different epistemic standards when forming beliefs about one's friends. Perhaps some subjective Bayesians would accept a highly permissive account of epistemic rationality that licenses significant epistemic partiality to one's friends. However, I suggest that it would be preferable to explain the difference between B's and C's responses without committing to such a highly permissive account of epistemic rationality.

Moreover, as Schoenfield stresses, we must take our "epistemic standards" as being truth-conducive. Yet I have suggested that a good friend can consciously recognize that those epistemic standards which lead her to believe well of her friends are different from those she uses when forming beliefs about strangers.[20] It seems *prima facie* very odd to consciously shift one's epistemic standards (in the wide sense) from context to context while still taking them to be maximally truth-conducive. As an illustration of this point, consider this case:

> *Identical Twins*: Suppose that there are two suspects for a recent theft from the convenience store, and you have identical evidence that each suspect is guilty. To assure evidential parity, suppose that the two suspects—call them Bob and Rob—are identical twins. The security camera footage makes it evident that one of them committed the crime, but the footage is of low enough quality that it gives no indication of which twin it captured. You know both Bob and Rob very well and judge that they are equally likely to steal. Yet you are friends with Bob but not Rob.

[20] It's worth noting that some proponents of epistemic partiality in friendship, such as Simon Keller, deny this point. Keller claims instead that friends simply ought not to think too hard about how friendship influences their beliefs (2007: 43). However, it is an unfortunate feature of his account that it entails that the norms of friendship cannot be consciously responded to and that friendship requires self-deception.

In this case, a proponent of the wide permissivist approach for vindicating epistemic partiality towards friends is committed to saying that it is epistemically permissible to treat identical evidence differently when you shift from forming a belief about Bob's innocence to forming a belief about Rob's innocence. If we individuate epistemic standards finely enough, it is in principle consistent with permissivism to allow that one could have very different epistemic standards for interpreting identical evidence as it bears on slightly different propositions. (And again, some subjective Bayesians might grant this.) However, it seems odd from a first-personal perspective to employ two very different sets of epistemic standards given identical evidence and yet take both sets of epistemic standards to be maximally truth-conducive. So while this type of case doesn't decisively rule out efforts to vindicate the epistemic rationality of epistemic partiality in friendship, it generates some pressure to deny that employing such different epistemic standards when forming beliefs about one's friends is epistemically rational.

For all of these reasons, appeals to permissivist accounts of epistemic rationality as a *complete* explanation of the intuitive difference between B and C seem sufficiently tendentious that it is better to say that C has practical reasons to believe well of E which can conflict with what she has most epistemic reason to believe. (This is compatible, however, with allowing that permissivism can explain *some* of the intuitive acceptability of C's response.)

Let us review the ground covered in section two. I have argued that appeals to moral encroachment or permissivist accounts of epistemic rationality are neither promising ways of vindicating the epistemic rationality of epistemic partiality in friendship nor promising ways of explaining the intuitive difference between B's response and C's response. Yet identifying the respects in which a phenomenologically plausible account of the norms governing belief in friendship is captured by and the respects in which it diverges from these two alternative

accounts nonetheless has helped to sharpen our picture of how, precisely, friendship provides reasons for belief. I have argued that the encroachment approach is correct in the respect that friends ought to have different evidential thresholds for forming certain beliefs about each other. The wide permissivist approach fares better insofar as it can accommodate this insight from encroachment, while at the same time better explaining how, when forming beliefs about each other, friends employ thoroughgoingly different epistemic standards. As such, appealing to the different epistemic standards employed when forming beliefs about a friend can explain how friendship provides indirect reasons for belief. However, the wide permissivist analysis is explanatorily inadequate because it can neither explain how indirect C-reasons differ from indirect B-reasons nor accommodate direct C-reasons.

While part of the appeal of the permissivist and encroachment approaches is that they seemed to offer ways to analyze *Accused Friend* without appealing to a distinctive class of putative WK-C-reasons, I suggest that it is necessary to appeal to the RKR/WKR distinction in order to provide an adequate explanation of the distinctiveness of C-reasons and to accommodate direct C-reasons. In section three, I will seek to show how attempting to classify B-reasons and C-reasons according to Schroeder's earmark test for distinguishing RKRs and WKRs reveals important differences between B-reasons and C-reasons. As such, my claim that B-reasons are WKRs but C-reasons are not WKRs provides a more promising explanation of the intuitive difference between B-reasons and C-reasons.

3. C-Reasons and the Earmark Test

In Schroeder's initial formulation of the earmark test, he notes three important differences between RKRs and WKRs. Schroeder focuses on the contrast between pragmatic and epistemic reasons for belief—and discusses the earmarks in terms specific to the distinction

between pragmatic and epistemic reasons for belief (e.g. by speaking of epistemic rationality)—but takes these three differences to be characteristic of the RKR/WKR distinction in general:

> [First,] there is some substantial asymmetry in how straightforward or easy it is to believe on the basis of pragmatic versus epistemic reasons…
> [Second,] there seems to be a distinctive dimension of rational assessment of beliefs—sometimes called epistemic rationality—that is affected by the epistemic reasons of which the subject is aware but not affected by the pragmatic reasons of which the subject is aware. The same observation goes, whether we are talking about the rationality of believing or rationality in believing—the distinction that epistemologists sometimes call the distinction between propositional and doxastic justification…Focusing on epistemic rationality—this distinct dimension of the rational assessment of beliefs—allows us to elide the question of whether there is also some sense in which Pascal showed belief in God to be rational, perhaps a more global or practical sense less central to epistemology…What is important is that there is some central dimension of rational assessment that is not affected by Pascalian considerations.
> A third important difference between epistemic and pragmatic reasons for belief is that epistemic, but not pragmatic, reasons appear to bear on the correctness of belief. A belief is correct just in case it is true, and epistemic reasons for belief bear on whether that belief is true, but pragmatic reasons are irrelevant to its truth. So in addition to being subject to asymmetry of motivation and to differentially bearing on the rationality of belief, epistemic reasons differ from pragmatic reasons in bearing on the standards of correctness for belief. (2012b: 459-60).[21]

These three earmarks play a crucial role in identifying RKRs and WKRs. Schroeder asserts "a key methodological principle" in distinguishing RKRs from WKRs: "if it quacks like a duck, it's a duck" (2012b: 480). In accordance with this principle, Schroeder claims, "if the reasons bear all the marks of right-kind reasons, they *are* right-kind reasons—after all, the 'right-kind'/'wrong-kind' distinction was just a catch-all label designed to cover an important class of differences that arise in a variety of domains" (2012b: 466, emphasis Schroeder's). This is not to say that the earmarks constitute the RKR/WKR distinction—as answering the question of what

[21] Schroeder also identifies a fourth earmark, the intuitively different "flavor" of RKRs and WKRs. However, Schroeder notes that this fourth earmark is "arguably not a proper earmark in its own right, but just the report of the intuitive naturalness of classifying various putatively wrong-kind reasons together" (2012b: n3). I likewise suspect that the different flavor of RKRs and WKRs is too vague to count as an earmark in its own right, so in the rest of this paper I will focus only on the first three earmarks.

constitutes the distinction would be the task of a substantive theoretical account of the RKR/WKR distinction—but that they are a reliable diagnostic tool for determining whether a putative reason counts as an RKR or a WKR.[22]

Applying the earmark test clearly renders many practical reasons to believe WKRs. However, I will argue in this section that C-reasons aren't clearly classifiable as either RKRs or as WKRs according to the earmark test. For the sake of simplicity, I will focus only on the case of *Accused Friend* to illustrate that reasons to believe well of one's friends cannot be easily classified as either RKRs or WKRs according to the earmark test.[23] However, similar results should hold for the other types of C-reasons as well (though I will not argue for this point at length). I will consider the case of reasons to believe well of a friend with regard to each earmark in turn.

---

[22] Pamela Hieronymi (2013) objects that Schroeder's earmarks are merely vague, pre-theoretical diagnostic tools which are unnecessary after an adequate account of the RKR/WKR distinction has been provided. If Hieronymi's criticisms of the earmark test hold water, then my project in this paper—arguing that a certain class of putative practical reasons for belief can't be clearly classified by using the earmarks test—would demonstrate nothing significant even if it is successful, as it appeals to a test whose results prove nothing important.
However, Schroeder (2013) provides what I take to be a compelling response to Hieronymi's objection. Schroeder argues that the earmarks capture the central phenomena that the RKR/WKR distinction is intended to explain: that some types of (putative) reasons are less motivationally efficacious and less relevant to rationality and correctness than other types of reasons. As such, they are useful tools for identifying the correct extension of a theoretical account of the RKR/WKR distinction. That is, if a putative reason exhibits each of the three earmarks, this is very strong evidence that it is an RKR. If it exhibits none of the three earmarks, this is very strong evidence that it is a WKR. Especially in the absence of a generally accepted theoretical account of the RKR/WKR distinction, appealing to the pre-theoretical arguments may actually be the best way to determine whether a putative reason counts as an RKR or a WKR. So if it turns out that some reasons aren't clearly categorizable on the basis of the earmark test, this *does* have interesting implications for the RKR/WKR distinction.

[23] While I won't consider at any length how B-reasons and C-reasons fare according to Schroeder's fourth earmark, let me suggest that the intuitive difference between B-reasons and C-reasons that *Accused Friend* is intended to bring out captures some difference in their "flavor."

3.1 Motivational Efficacy

In *Accused Friend*, one reason that B's claim—that he believes that E is innocent because E has offered him money to do so—is difficult to swallow is that it seems dubious that B is genuinely citing the motivating reason for his belief. That is, it seems extremely difficult, if not impossible, to directly and consciously form a belief on the basis of a bribe. By contrast, C's claim—that she believes that E is innocent because E is her friend—more plausibly constitutes a motivating reason for her belief to which C is directly and consciously responding. C's answer nevertheless seems incomplete, for in order for her answer to constitute an honest response to the question, C must also have at least *some* evidential reasons for believing in E's innocence. If C were to admit that the evidence overwhelmingly supports E's guilt but still claimed to believe that E is innocent because E is her friend, we might suspect that her claim is disingenuous. If, however, C were to state that the evidence against E is strong but indecisive—perhaps that it makes E's innocence roughly as likely as E's guilt—yet that she positively believes that E is innocent because E is her friend, this seems like a credible report of the motivating reasons for her belief. After all, as Stroud observes, most of us routinely form more favorable beliefs about our friends than strangers might (and at least sometimes do so consciously). As such, it does not seem especially hard to directly and consciously believe well of someone because they are your friend.

Intuitively, then, it is unclear whether to count such reasons of friendship as RKRs or as WKRs with regard to this first earmark. Reasons to believe well of someone because they are your friend are less motivationally efficacious than paradigmatic RKRs—evidential reasons—and they typically need to be supplemented by at least some RKRs to jointly constitute sufficient motivating reasons for belief. Yet they are also more motivationally efficacious than

paradigmatic WKRs like bribes, and it seems perfectly natural to cite them as partial indirect or direct motivating reasons. As such, these reasons of friendship fall somewhere in between RKRs and WKRs according to the first earmark test.

Of course, one might object to this proposal either by denying that *any* practical reasons are motivationally efficacious, or (from the opposite direction) by claiming that in fact *all* practical reasons are motivationally efficacious in the same way. Let's consider these objections in turn.

The first objection must target both of the following claims: 1) friendship can provide motivationally efficacious indirect reasons for belief, and 2) friendship can provide motivationally efficacious direct reasons for belief. One way of targeting 1) is to observe that if friends employ putative epistemic standards when forming beliefs about each other that they recognize are not maximally truth-conducive (as I have argued they do), it is difficult to see how these count as holding genuine epistemic standards. Indeed, it is difficult to see how someone could genuinely believe the outputs generated by epistemic standards which they take to be less than maximally truth-conducive. It sounds quasi-Moore-paradoxical to adopt epistemic standards that one doesn't take to maximally truth-conducive.

In response, I think this worry can be significantly mitigated by observing that we routinely form beliefs according to procedures which, upon reflection, we can recognize are not maximally truth-conducive. For instance, it is often noted in the literature on irrelevant influences on belief that many religious and philosophical beliefs are the products of belief-forming procedures informed by irrelevant (i.e. non-truth-conducive) influences. Yet recognizing the causal role of irrelevant influences in the formation of our beliefs—and even recognizing that the standards we employed in forming our beliefs are not maximally truth-conducive—does not

cause us to immediately lose confidence in the beliefs generated by these procedures. As Rinard (2019) observes, "It is possible to acquire and retain certain beliefs, and regard them as true, even though you recognize that they were caused by a procedure not generally reliable at producing true beliefs" (2019: 776). We may admittedly experience some genealogical anxiety and hold our beliefs somewhat more tentatively when we recognize that our beliefs were produced in a manner which is not maximally truth-conducive, but this recognition often does not lead to thoroughgoing skepticism about all matters in which we employ such procedures.[24] It is doubtless at least somewhat epistemically irrational to preserve our beliefs when we acquire higher-order evidence that the procedure by which we evaluated our first-order evidence in forming the beliefs is not maximally truth-conducive. Yet this is precisely the point: being a good friend is hard, and it sometimes requires epistemic irrationality, but it is surely possible.

The perhaps the most worrisome objection to 2) is that it entails the falsehood of a principle of "transparency" which many philosophers find plausible: that "the deliberative question *whether to believe that p* inevitably gives way to the factual question *whether p*" (Shah 2006: 481, emphasis Shah's). Accepting that there are directly motivationally efficacious practical reasons for belief entails a more thoroughgoing rejection of transparency than the suggestion that practical reasons can serve as indirect motivating reasons via the adoption of epistemic standards.

One of the principal motivations for accepting transparency is that after introspecting on how we form beliefs, it accurately captures the phenomenology of this process. However, the scenarios that I considered in section 2.2 provide occasion to question this claim. It is plausible, I

[24] I find it plausible that the epistemic standards we employ in philosophy are less truth-conducive than those which good friends employ when forming beliefs about their friends. So if we can have genuine philosophical beliefs, surely we can have genuine beliefs about our friends' characters.

have tried to show, that in deliberating about what to believe we might directly and consciously respond to reasons to believe what our friends tell us and to believe well of our friends. So while denying transparency requires biting a bullet, I don't think the bullet is a fatal one.

To object to my application of this first earmark from the opposite direction, one might insist that all practical reasons are in principle motivationally efficacious in the same way. That is, on the basis of both B-reasons and C-reasons one can equally easily adopt belief-forming procedures and epistemic standards that will result in forming one's desired belief or belief-forming disposition (e.g. by seeking out evidence that will confirm the desired belief and avoiding acquiring evidence that will disconfirm it, continuing inquiry when the results are unfavorable and ending inquiry as soon as the results are favorable, and giving more weight to evidence that confirms the desired belief and less weight to disconfirming evidence).[25]

Another way to bring out this point is that there seems to be an asymmetry between B's answers and C's answers only when it involves a self-report about one's own reasons for belief. While it sounds disingenuous to cite financial incentives as one's own reasons for belief, it doesn't sound so odd to cite financial incentives when describing someone else's reasons for belief. For instance, if you ask me why Erica disbelieves in climate change, I might point out that Erica works as a lobbyist for the oil industry. This seems like a credible, if only partial, explanation of why Erica disbelieves in climate change. Similarly, if you ask why Jack is convinced that Jill is guilty despite the indecisive evidence against her, it seems like a legitimate response to explain that he has this belief because he hates her. So, a proponent of this line of thought might conclude, despite the appearance of a qualitative difference between B's and C's responses, their answers turn out to be very similar as explanations of the reason for their beliefs:

[25] Cf. Stephanie Leary's (2017) argument that practical considerations (presumably of all sorts) can be reasons for belief that operate by making one more responsive to epistemic reasons.

both have adopted certain epistemic standards on the basis of practical considerations, and these practical considerations count as indirect motivating reasons.[26]

To respond to this objection, first let me reiterate that in addition to serving as indirect reasons for belief by providing reasons to adopt different epistemic standards when forming beliefs about one's friends, friendship plausibly can also provide reasons for belief which are directly motivationally efficacious. Reflecting on the phenomenology of forming beliefs about friends as opposed to the phenomenology of forming beliefs in response to incentives suggests, I think, that it is much more plausible that reasons of friendship could be directly motivationally efficacious than that reasons provided by financial incentives can. Even if there are some similarities in the ways in which reasons of friendship and financial incentives motivationally operate, this difference still drives a crucial wedge between them.

Second, we can explain away the asymmetry between reporting one's own reasons for belief and another person's reasons for belief by observing that it is most natural to interpret self-reported reasons for belief as a description of motivating reasons yet interpret a report of another person's reasons for belief as mere explanatory reasons. Explanatory reasons offer a causal explanation of why an agent ϕ-ed, but (unlike motivating reasons) they need not be the basis, or the reason for which, an agent ϕ-ed and need not be recognized by the agent as a normative reason for ϕ-ing. In Stephanie Leary's account:

> R is a motivating reason *for which* S ϕ-ed if and only if
> (i) S *conceives* of R as a normative reason to ϕ in some way
> (ii) (i) disposes S to ϕ, and
> (iii) (ii) causes S to ϕ (in the right way). (2017: 535)

[26] A proponent of the objection could even grant that some WKRs for belief are more motivationally efficacious than others. For instance, perhaps it is *somewhat easier* for reasons of friendship to inform our belief-forming procedure than for financial incentives to do so. But as Hieronymi (2013) points out, some RKRs are more motivationally efficacious than others, so observing some degree of motivational asymmetry among different classes of reasons doesn't necessarily entail that one is less of a WKR.

This rough account should suffice for our purposes of distinguishing between motivating and explanatory reasons. It's natural to interpret C as citing the reason that she conceives of as a normative reason to believe that E is innocent, to be disposed (to some degree) to believe that E is innocent for this reason, and to actually believe that E is innocent in part because of this disposition. By contrast, the above explanation for why Erica does not believe in climate change provides a causal explanation of her belief but is not naturally interpreted as the basis of her belief or a reason that she conceives of as a normative reason for her belief.

The reason for this difference, I suggest, is that some practical considerations can more easily serve as *conscious* reasons to adopt certain epistemic standards. While it may be possible for Erica to consciously adopt her epistemic standards on the basis of financial incentives (by using the sort of method that Rinard (2019) describes), these financial incentives are more plausibly construed as causing Erica to unconsciously adopt her epistemic standards.[27] By contrast, C can credibly be interpreted as citing her conscious motivating reasons for adopting the epistemic standards that resulted in her believing that E is innocent. This is not to deny that friendship often affects our epistemic standards at an unconscious level. The point is rather that friendship can also provide conscious motivating reasons for adopting epistemic standards. Thus C-reasons also differ from B-reasons in that they can more easily and straightforwardly be responded to as indirect reasons for belief.

[27] Leary's account of motivating reasons, in which an agent must conceive of R as a reason, seems to rule out the possibility of unconscious motivating reasons. One could of course reject Leary's account of what it is for a reason to count as a motivating reason to allow for the possibility of unconscious motivating reasons. Making this maneuver would create space for admitting that financial incentives could serve as Erica's motivating reasons even if they are unconscious. However, this would not refute my main point: that C-reasons can more easily and straightforwardly serve as motivating reasons.

In sum, my claim in this section is that it is easier and more straightforward to believe on the basis of C-reasons than on B-reasons because C-reasons can be more easily consciously responded to as indirect motivating reasons for belief and (at least sometimes) as direct motivating reasons for belief. These two differences provide good reasons to resist assimilating C-reasons to WKRs in light of the first earmark.

3.2 Rationality

Schroeder's second earmark involves the "distinctive type of rational assessment" that is affected by the RKRs of which a subject is aware. One initial motivation for evaluating B-reasons and C-reasons differently according to the second earmark could result from a potential diagnosis of the intuitive, inchoate judgment that I sought to draw out in *Accused Friend*: that C's belief is more rational than B's. That proponents of pragmatic encroachment seek to vindicate the notion that the considerations that C cites bear on epistemic rationality—the primary "distinctive type of rational assessment" for beliefs—suggests that there is some intuitive pressure to categorize C-reasons and B-reasons differently with regard to this second earmark.

However, in my objections to pragmatic encroachment and permissivism in section two, I argued that C's belief might be epistemically irrational.[28] In the account that I offered in section

[28] Reasons to believe well of one's friends are not relevant to epistemic rationality given standard accounts of epistemic rationality (which I am granting in this paper). But insofar as Schroeder's earmarks are intended to offer pre-theoretical diagnostic tools, one might worry that this earmark invokes an objectionably theory-laden conception of epistemic rationality (as Bastian (2019) notes). As such, it's worth noting that on a revised conception of epistemic rationality—along the lines of Kate Nolfi's action-oriented account of belief, for instance—there may be a way to vindicate the relevance of C-reasons for belief for epistemic rationality which is consistent with much of my proposal in section two. Nolfi argues that the function of belief is to serve as "flexible-use predictive tools to facilitate environmentally sensitive action selection across a variety of different circumstances and in the service of a variety of different potential ends…On the action-oriented approach, a belief enjoys one kind of positive epistemic status—i.e. a belief is appropriately subject to a species of epistemic praise—when it is well-suited to fulfill this action-

two, it becomes difficult to see how C's belief is any less epistemically irrational than B's—and thus difficult to see how C-reasons fare differently than B-reasons according to the second earmark.

Yet the crucial feature of the second earmark seems to be not that RKRs for belief must bear on epistemic rationality in particular, but rather that RKRs for belief bear on a privileged, distinctive type of rational assessment which is "central to epistemology." In his discussion of how the second earmark applies to reasons for belief, Schroeder explains, "What is important is that there is some central dimension of rational assessment that is not affected by Pascalian considerations" (2012b: 460). Since the RKR/WKR distinction is intended to apply to a variety of types of attitude, the more general point is that for each attitude there is a distinctive mode of rational assessment.

One could, of course, insist that epistemic rationality is the *only* distinctive sort of rationality at issue in applying the second earmark to reasons for belief. In response, I am willing to concede that epistemic rationality is the primary sort of distinctive rationality at issue, and that reasons for belief provided by friendship don't bear on epistemic rationality shows that they aren't RKRs. However, I find it plausible that there may be *secondary* distinctive and relevant notions of rationality that C-reasons bear on. For instance, I have argued that beliefs can be rationally assessed in terms of responsiveness to friendship-based reasons for belief which bear directly and immediately on beliefs formed about a friend. So even if the reasons generated by friendship do not bear on epistemic rationality—and hence are not RKRs according to this

---

oriented proper function" (2019: 39). Since having beliefs somewhat biased in favor of our friends is useful across a variety of circumstances and in the service of a variety of different potential ends, on Nolfi's account of epistemic rationality, being disposed to believe well of our friends could turn out to be epistemically rational. Because B-reasons are often highly circumstance-dependent, they do *not* (at least typically) bear on a belief's flexible-use as a predictive tool. If Nolfi is right, then this strengthens my argument that C-reasons are not WKRs.

earmark—this does not entail that they are WKRs. Instead, if I can show that believing on the basis of such C-reasons is rational in a distinctive sense relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction (i.e. rational in a different way than believing on the basis of Pascalian or financial considerations might be rational), then this suggests that these C-reasons fall somewhere in between RKRs and WKRs.

Instead of developing such an account now, I will punt this issue to section 3.3 because the second and third earmarks can naturally be interpreted as very closely related.[29] On some accounts of rationality, an attitude is rational insofar as it is responsive to the reasons the agent has bearing on the correctness of the attitude. For this reason, an argument that there are secondary standards of correctness relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction will directly translate into an argument for a distinctive, secondary notion of rationality as well. If my argument goes through in section 3.3—that the standard of correctness for beliefs about friends is relevantly different from those standards of correctness which derive from norms which clearly generate only WKRs—then this will strength the case for my claim that the rational assessment of beliefs with regard to "friendship-based reasons for belief" likewise cannot be assimilated to the sort of rational assessment characteristic of WKRs. Let us wait to evaluate the success of my argument in 3.2 until considering the related argument in 3.3.

3.3 Correctness

The notion of a "standard of correctness" to which Schroeder appeals in his third earmark is arguably even more vague and theoretically loaded than that of epistemic rationality. Nonetheless, at least with regard to belief, the basic idea of a "standard of correctness" is straightforward enough: a belief is correct if and only if it is true. And since evidence is a guide

[29] For instance, Ralph Wedgwood (2017) argues that correctness is the external *aim* of rationality.

to truth, evidence bears on the correctness of a belief, and thus counts as an RKR. Non-evidential considerations just are those considerations which don't bear on the truth of the proposition which a belief takes as its object. So, it seems, according to this earmark all non-evidential considerations are WKRs.

However, in this section I will argue that beliefs can be subject to multiple standards of correctness. These secondary standards of correctness do not bear on all beliefs but only apply to a subset of beliefs in which the believer bears a specific relation (e.g. friendship) to an object (e.g. their friend) denoted in the proposition which the belief takes as its object. If beliefs are subject to such standards of correctness, then it's again unclear how to classify C-reasons with respect to the third earmark because such beliefs might be "incorrect" with regard to a primary standard yet "correct" with regard to a secondary standard.

Before developing my argument for this conclusion, let me flag some initial concerns that one might have about the argument's ability to get off the ground. First, one might worry that even if there are secondary norms to which beliefs in friendship are subject, perhaps referring to secondary standards of correctness is at best awkward and at worst a category mistake. That is, the notion of correctness properly applies only to the "internal" or "constitutive" standards of an attitude.

Yet as Hieronymi (2013) observes, we can pragmatically assess the correctness of all sorts of attitudes or actions. There is a good sense of "correctness," I think, in which an attitude or action is correct just in case it satisfies a relevant norm. It is "correct" according to some norms of etiquette to set one's fork on the left side of the plate. Likewise, it is "correct" according to the norms of friendship to believe well of a friend.

A more serious worry is that even if it makes sense to talk about an "external" standard of correctness, the sort of standard of correctness *relevant* to the earmark test must be a constitutive or internal standard—a standard of correctness built into the nature of the attitude. As Gertken and Kiesewetter (2017) note, philosophers who appeal to a standard of correctness when drawing the RKR/WKR distinction typically mean something like an "internal" standard of correctness. Schroeder likewise seems to mean something like this when he says, "The class of right-kind reasons with respect to any activity will need to depend on the nature of that activity, in some way" (2012b: 482-83).

In response to this objection, I concede both that the primary standard of correctness must be constitutive of the activity or attitude in question and that in order to be classified as an RKR according to this third earmark, a reason must bear on the primary standard of correctness. However, I will argue in this section that attitudes can be subject to a secondary standard of correctness which is not constitutive of the attitude, but which nonetheless applies to the attitude in a distinctive way relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction.

To examine how these secondary standards of correctness operate, consider again the case of friendship. It is highly plausible that friendship is governed by a set of norms governing how friends ought to think, feel, and act towards each other. As Stroud (2006) persuasively argues, just as good friends are loyal to each other and defend each other's character when they are criticized by others, good friends are disposed to believe well of each other. Just as our actions become subject to additional norms when we enter into a relationship of friendship with somebody, so too do our attitudes. For example, friends ought to feel affection towards each other and desire to be in each other's presence. Likewise, friends ought to be disposed to believe well of each other and ought to believe what they tell each other (to a greater degree than

strangers). Simply put, being epistemically partial to your friends is part of being a good friend. Consequently, when we become friends with someone, our beliefs (and our belief-forming procedures) become subject to an additional norm.

A variety of friendship's features contribute to explaining how beliefs become subject to additional norms in friendship.[30] Stroud suggests, for instance, that "friendship is importantly contingent on continued esteem for one's friend's merits and character" (2006: 511). Stroud suggests as well that "our friendships function as commitments. To be someone's friend is to have cast your lot in with his and, indeed, with his good character; and this properly affects how you respond to new situations and new data" (2006: 512). If Stroud is right, then it is part of the nature of friendship that good friends are disposed to believe well of each other because these beliefs are conditions of the friendship itself.

Beliefs in friendship may also become subject to additional norms because beliefs *partially constitute* a friendship. (This suggestion goes beyond, but is consistent with, Stroud's explanation of the source of the norms of friendship governing belief.) In their paper on doxastic wronging, Basu and Schroeder remark, albeit without elaboration, "that cases of doxastic wronging are important because they dramatize the role that our beliefs about one another play in

[30] It is worth observing that my explanation of the source of the reasons friends have to believe well of each other excludes other accounts given in the literature. Simon Keller, another proponent of epistemic partiality in friendship, offers a rationale for why we ought to be epistemically partial towards our friends which does not appeal to the norms of friendship as such. Rather, Keller thinks that epistemic partiality is appropriate only in certain types of friendship. Keller (2018) suggests that the best Aristotelian friendships between friends of virtue do not involve any epistemic partiality because each friend is genuinely virtuous, so believing well of the friend simply involves accurately perceiving their character. While epistemic partiality isn't a feature of friendship as such, Keller claims, reasons that we have to believe well of our friends bottom out in reasons we have to promote their well-being. Given our imperfections, we often have an interest in how others—especially our friends—think of us. Encouraging one's friends when they are subject to self-doubt, for instance, is an important part of being a good friend.

constituting our interpersonal relationships—a powerful connection between belief and human sociality" (2019: 203). Schroeder (2018) claims that "our interpersonal relationships are in part constituted by our beliefs about one another. Insofar as our beliefs help to constitute our relationships, the effects of our beliefs on our relationships are not mediated by the effects of our beliefs on our actions or other behaviors."[31] If our beliefs about our friends partly constitute our friendships themselves, it is unsurprising that beliefs could come to be subject to additional norms—and moreover as evaluated as correct or incorrect *qua* friendship beliefs—insofar as they contribute well or poorly to a friendship.

The claim that beliefs partially constitute our relationships explains how this secondary standard of correctness differs in important ways from, for instance, a standard of correctness which says that a belief is correct if and only if it maximizes expected utility. Norms of friendship involve standards of correctness which apply *directly* and *immediately*. Because beliefs themselves—and not their downstream consequences—partially constitute friendships, the beliefs themselves are likewise evaluable as correct or incorrect by the standard given by the norms of friendship. By contrast, those standards of correctness irrelevant to the RKR/WKR distinction—such as the standard that says a belief is correct if and only if it will maximize expected utility—are indirect and mediate. For example, if you believe that God exists because this belief maximizes expected utility, the belief is correct according to this standard simply because it is a mere *causal means* to realizing an end. So even if there is another standard of

[31] Schroeder (forthcoming) develops this suggestion in light of his interpretive theory of persons, according to which "a person is *constituted* by the best interpretation of what contribution their behavior makes to the world" (forthcoming: 14, emphasis Schroeder's). However, I want to avoid the complications introduced by Schroeder's interpretive theory of persons and instead focus only on the contribution that beliefs make to the constitution of relationships.

correctness to which beliefs are subject, such standards would generate only WKRs for belief. But in the case of friendship, believing well of a friend *constitutes* satisfying the norm.

While the standard of correctness provided by friendship is "external" in the sense that it is not constitutive of the attitude of belief, the standard of correctness is not "external" in the sense that it assesses a belief according to anything which the belief produces external to itself. That is, the standard of correctness immediately assesses the belief itself and not its effects. By contrast, standards of correctness that count paradigmatic WKRs as correct typically assess only the effects of the attitude, i.e. something external to the attitude. This crucial difference thus supports the notion that reasons that bear on an immediate secondary standard of correctness are not as clearly WKRs as reasons that bear on a mediate secondary standard of correctness.

One might object that my account is extensionally inadequate because other quasi-Pascalian standards of correctness which seem irrelevant to the RKR/WKR distinction can also be directly and immediately assessed independently of their effects. For instance, suppose that my psychological makeup is such that believing that I am an excellent athlete is a constitutive part of my happiness. Believing that I am an excellent athlete partly constitutes the state of affairs that I expect will maximize my utility, and so this belief can be directly and immediately assessed as correct according to the standard of expected utility maximization.

Barring the addition of further conditions to my account of how secondary standards of correctness are relevant to the WKR distinction, it admittedly does have the counterintuitive implication of entailing that such quasi-Pascalian standards of correctness are relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction. While this is a cost of the view as it is currently stated, I don't think that it is a devastating objection. Let me briefly suggest two different lines of response to lessen the counterintuitiveness of this implication. First, it may suggest that there is in fact something

importantly different about all standards of correctness which directly and immediately apply to attitudes. That is, despite the *prima facie* similarities to Pascalian cases, the case above differs in a way relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction. Alternatively, this may simply reveal that my account needs to add more conditions to rule out these quasi-Pascalian cases.[32]

Admittedly, these brief remarks leave many questions unanswered and might not wholly satisfy a skeptic about the relevance of secondary standards of correctness to the RKR/WKR distinction. Nonetheless, I think they make a presumptive case for supposing that while reasons to believe well of a friend should not be classified as RKRs with respect to the third earmark because they do not bear on a primary standard of correctness, neither should they—or any C-reasons which similarly bear on immediate secondary standards of correctness—be classified as WKRs.

If there is a secondary standard of correctness for beliefs relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction, this supports my claim in section 3.2 that its concomitant mode of rational assessment is likewise relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction. If a standard of correctness is genuinely normative—as the standard of correctness provided by friendship is—agents who form attitudes subject to this standard of correctness are rationally assessable in a distinctive way: according to how they respond to the reasons that bear on the attitude's correctness. As such, my argument in this section that believing well of a friend satisfies a secondary standard of correctness suggests that reasons to believe well of a friend likewise bear on a secondary yet distinctive notion of rational assessment. Consequently, C-reasons should not be considered WKRs with respect to the second earmark either.

[32] I am inclined to prefer this latter response. Unfortunately, it may be a project for the future to articulate a more precise and more extensionally adequate account of which secondary standards of correctness are relevant to the RKR/WKR distinction.

4. Conclusion

If my argument in this paper is successful, it shows that Schroeder's earmark test does not clearly categorize reasons to believe well of friends as either RKRs or WKRs. One might take this conclusion to constitute an objection to the earmark test and thereby judge that it fails to accurately categorize reasons which intuitively count as WKRs. This could indicate that the earmarks don't provide an extensionally adequate pre-theoretical indication of whether a reason is an RKR or a WKR. However, the intuition I tried to bring out in *Accused Friend*—that there is a normatively significant difference between the reasons cited by B and those cited by C—instead supports the conclusion that the RKR/WKR distinction is not as sharp as it has typically been assumed.

This lack of sharpness in the RKR/WKR distinction could admit of either a (weaker) epistemic interpretation or a (stronger) metaphysical reading. On the epistemic interpretation, it is simply sometimes hard to tell whether a putative reason is an RKR or a WKR. On the metaphysical interpretation, there is a distinct class of reasons which are neither RKRs nor WKRs. If my argument in this paper succeeds, I think it supports the metaphysical interpretation. If our beliefs about our friends are subject to secondary norms, then such norms generate somewhat motivationally efficacious reasons—which are in some sense rational and correct—to believe well of our friends. Bearing characteristics of both RKRs and WKRs, such reasons are members of an in-between, medial class of reasons, which we might call the "medial kind of reason" (MKR). Of course, providing an account of MKRs—which would include integrating MKRs into a systematic, theoretically developed account of the RKR/WKR distinction—is a

major task which I cannot undertake here. So for now, I will leave open the many questions this account raises.[33]

A further implication is that if the sorts of practical considerations discussed in this paper are intuitively acceptable reasons for belief, my argument here constitutes an objection to skepticism about WKRs for belief (i.e. evidentialism). The difficulties of accommodating cases in which practical considerations intuitively bear on what we ought to believe via machinery (moral encroachment or permissivism) compatible with evidentialism about reasons for beliefs suggests the need for an alternative analysis which is incompatible with evidentialism. While I have officially stayed neutral regarding whether WKRs can be genuine reasons, my argument offers WKR skeptics a way to allow that some practical considerations—those which most intuitively *do* bear on what we ought to believe—can be genuine normative reasons for belief. Of course, WKRs skeptics might also be attracted to MKR skepticism, but countenancing MKRs might strike some WKR skeptics as more palatable than countenancing WKRs. My proposal thus identifies another, previously overlooked option in the logical space of the normativity of reasons that some philosophers may find appealing: accepting MKRs but not WKRs as genuine reasons.

Finally, let me conclude by suggesting that my argument extends to reasons for other types of attitudes subject to the RKR/WKR distinction. If we have MKRs to believe well of our friends, we might also have MKRs to desire, admire, or love our friends. It is, quite plausibly, easier and more straightforward, more rational, and in some sense more correct to admire

[33] To name just a couple such questions: whether postulating MKRs is compatible with existing accounts of the RKR/WKR distinction, or whether it requires a new theoretical account altogether; and whether reasons which bear some marks of RKRs and some marks of WKRs are really a *sui generis* class of MKRs, or whether the RKR/WKR distinction is gradable (i.e. MKRs just are those reasons which fall in between pure RKRs and pure WKRs, such that an MKR is an RKR to the extent that it has the characteristics of an RKR and a WKR to the extent that it has the characteristics of a WKR).

someone because they are your friend than because you are offered a bribe to admire them.[34] (If anything, the case for supposing that there are MKRs to have these attitudes towards a friend may be *stronger* than the case for supposing that there are MKRs to believe well of a friend.) If this is right, the RKR/WKR distinction in general is more complex than has typically been recognized.

[34] Likewise, other types of attitudes subject to norms outside of the domain of friendship plausibly admit of MKRs. For example, while it is often assumed that the fact that it would be morally wrong to be amused by a racist joke is a WKR against being amused by it (as D'Arms and Jacobson (2000) argue, though they put their point in terms of fittingness instead of WKRs), my analysis suggests that it might be an MKR. It seems plausible that it is easier and more straightforward, more rational in a distinctive sense, and more correct to not be amused by a racist joke because it violates a secondary norm governing amusement than because of financial incentives.

REFERENCES

Basu, Rima (2019a). "What We Epistemically Owe to Each Other." *Philosophical Studies* 176 (4): 915-931.

_____ (2019b). "The Wrongs of Racist Beliefs." *Philosophical Studies* 176 (9): 2497-515.

_____ (2019c). "Radical Moral Encroachment: The Moral Stakes of Racist Beliefs." *Philosophical Issues* 29 (1): 9-23.

Basu, Rima and Schroeder, Mark (2019). "Doxastic Wronging." In Kim & McGrath (eds.), *Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology.* London: Routledge: 181-205.

Bastian, Lisa (2019). "Minimal Disturbance: In Defense of Pragmatic Reasons of the Right Kind." *Philosophical Studies.*

Crewe, Bianca, & Ichikawa, Jonathan Jenkins (forthcoming). "Rape Culture and Epistemology." In Lackey (ed.), *Applied Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

D'Arms, Justin and Jacobson, Daniel (2000). "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (1): 65-90.

Gertken, Jan and Kiesewetter, Benjamin (2017). "The Right and Wrong Kinds of Reasons." *Philosophy Compass* 12 (5).

Hieronymi, Pamela (2013). "The Use of Reasons in Thought (and the Use of Earmarks in Arguments)." *Ethics* 124 (1): 114– 127.

Fritz, James (2019). "Moral Encroachment and Reasons of the Wrong Kind." *Philosophical Studies.*

Keller, Simon (2007). *The Limits of Loyalty.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____ (2018). "Belief for Someone Else's Sake." *Philosophical Topics* 46 (1): 19-35.

Leary, Stephanie (2017). "In Defense of Practical Reasons for Belief." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 95 (3): 529-42.

McCormick, Miriam (2018). "No Kind of Reason is the Wrong Kind of Reason." In McCain (ed.), *Believing in Accordance with the Evidence: New Essays on Evidentialism.* Springer.

Moran, Richard (2005). "Getting Told and Being Believed." *Philosophers' Imprint* 5:5.

_____ (2013). "Testimony, Illocution, and the Second Person." In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 87 (1): 115-135.

Morton, Jennifer and Paul, Sarah (2018). “Believing in Others.” *Philosophical Topics* 46 (1): 75-95.

_____ (2019). “Grit.” *Ethics* 129 (2): 175-203.

Moss, Sarah (2018). “Moral Encroachment.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 118 (2): 177-205.

Nolfi, Kate (2018). “Why Only Evidential Considerations Can Justify Belief.” In McHugh, Way, and Whiting (eds.), *Normativity: Epistemic and Practical*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____ (2019). “Another Kind of Pragmatic Encroachment.” In Kim & McGrath (eds.), *Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology.* London: Routledge: 35-55.

Preston-Roedder, Ryan (2013) “Faith in Humanity.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 87 (3): 664-687.

Rinard, Susanna (2019). “Believing for Practical Reasons.” *Nous* 53 (4): 763-785.

Schoenfield, Miriam (2014). “Permission to Believe: Why Permissivism Is True and What It Tells Us about Irrelevant Influences on Belief.” *Nous* 48 (2): 193–218.

Schroeder, Mark. (2012a). “Stakes, Witholding, and Pragmatic Encroachment.” *Philosophical Studies* 160 (2): 265-285.

_____ (2012b). “The Ubiquity of State-Given Reasons.” *Ethics* 122 (3): 457– 488.

_____ (2013). “State-given Reasons: Prevalent, if not Ubiquitous.” *Ethics* 124 (1): 128– 140.

_____ (2018). “When Beliefs Wrong.” *Philosophical Topics* 46 (1): 115-27.

_____ (forthcoming). “Persons as Things.” *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics.*

Shah, Nishi (2006). “A New Argument for Evidentialism.” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 56 (225): 481–98.

Stroud, Sarah (2006). “Epistemic Partiality in Friendship.” *Ethics* 116 (3): 498–524.

Wedgwood, Ralph (2017). *The Value of Rationality.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Worsnip, Alex (2020). “Can Pragmatists be Moderate?” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.*

_____ (forthcoming). *Fitting Things Together: Coherence and the Demands of Structural Rationality.*